

Stronger Lobby Laws Advocated By Legislator

By VINCENT THOMAS
Assemblyman, 68th District

While the fiscal affairs committees of our two houses continue their close scrutiny of the mammoth budget for 1964-65, the attention of other committees and members has been focused on a number of other matters of current interest. For example, what to do about a farm labor supply when the bracero program ends, and how county boards of supervisors should be reapportioned after every census, are the topics of several measures which have been introduced.

During our 1963 sessions, charges were hurled about in the public prints that unnamed legislative advocates had made illegal use of feminine companionship to influence votes of Legislators. An administrative study of the accusations was made by the attorney general, but his staff could produce no specific evidence either supporting or refuting the allegations. Much criticism was aimed at the 15-year-old legislative advocates' registration law on the ground that it is too lax, and not effectively enforced.

The Senate Committee on Legislative Representation, which

has certain watch-dog responsibilities concerning registration of lobbyists, decided to make a thorough study of whether major revision in the registration law is needed, and employed an expert in lobby control to aid it. The committee held hearings, and in independent staff investigation was made.

UNDER THE existing law, lobbyists are required to submit credentials from their employers, to register before beginning work, and to file regular reports of their pay for lobbying, and of their expenditures for all purposes connected with their work, including those for entertainment, favors, and the like. Under the joint rules of our two houses, the office of the Legislative Analyst handles the registration and receives the financial reports. A committee of each house supervises the examination of credentials, as well as the operation of the system.

Failure to register, or willfully to file required reports, or willful mis-statement of fact in a report, are misdemeanors, punishable by a fine up to \$5,000, or by imprisonment for not more than a year. Any person convicted under the law

who lobbies within three years of conviction, is guilty of a felony. The office of the attorney general has the responsibility for prosecution of alleged violations. No cases have so far arisen.

THE CHAIRMAN of the Senate committee recently told the press that major revision

of the existing law would not serve a useful purpose. "The act as it stands is fairly workable and adequate." He declared that lobbyists are not entirely at fault for alleged inefficiency in administration of the law. The Legislature and the attorney general's office must share the blame, he added, for never having provided administrative arrangements so the law can be properly enforced.

The chairman advocated that the Legislative Analyst be given more watch-dog powers over lobbying. The existing division of responsibility between two legislative commit-

tees, the analyst, and the attorney general has meant that enforcement has been "nobody's business," he said. He recommended that lobbying functions be consolidated as far as possible in the analyst's office to enable "vigorous management" of the lobbyist's registration law.

Calendars Given

The Vita Pakt Corp. has donated patriotic calendars for all classrooms in the Torrance schools. The calendars feature a Pledge of Allegiance plaque.

Revival Series Closing Sunday

A special revival series led by the Rev. Eugene Virt of Prescott, Ariz., is continuing at the Keystone Baptist Church, 435 W. 220th St. Arthur Cheney is song leader for the services.

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